



January 2021

Dear Friends of Community Partnership School,

At CPS, we align closely with Dr. King's sense of equity and justice and appropriate these ideals year-round, not just on the third Monday each January. As we approach the month set aside to highlight the history and contributions of people of African descent in America, I offer this thought about Dr. King beyond his much-celebrated "I Have A Dream" speech.

Martin Luther King, Jr was full of hope. He had to be. How else could he reconcile his deep belief in the American promise "to secure the blessing of liberty to ourselves and our posterity" with persistent second-class citizenship staring him, his peers, his forebears, and his children in the face, daily and without fail?

Somehow he avoided bitterness and shunned violence. He saw how seemingly contrary forces - namely hope and hypocrisy - are interconnected in America, leading him, in his fervent embrace of this nation, to confront it vigorously, even though doing so placed him constantly in harm's way.

Community Partnership School is a testament to the power of hope in the face of hypocrisy. The relevance of our mission - to meet talent with opportunity - reflects the extensive impact of persistent inequality, exclusion, and injustice. This nagging reality makes our work to equip children from chronically underinvested communities with tools and networks that build agency and facilitate dream-fulfillment, relevant, vital, and hopeful.

May we all, like King, maintain a clear-eyed, grown-up assessment of the paradox that is the American dream - the hope it embodies and the necessary work that remains to truly make it reality. Doing so will activate the compassion and courage it takes to do what we can to make our nation's ideals more consistently accessible for more of its citizens - to commit to the doing and not just talking or writing, however heartfelt and compelling the statements might be.

Activist, statesman, and hero John Lewis speaks to this compellingly in an essay he penned shortly before his death this past summer, a portion of which follows:

... I was searching for a way out, or some might say a way in, and then I heard the voice of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on an old radio. He was talking about the philosophy and discipline of nonviolence. He said we are all complicit when we tolerate injustice. He said it is not enough to say it will get better by and by. He said each of us has a moral obligation to stand up, speak up and speak out. When you see something that is not right, you must say something. You must do something. Democracy is not a state. It is an act....

From "Together, You Can Redeem the Soul of Our Nation"

With gratitude,



Eric C. Jones
CPS Head of School

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